



08

BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY IN THE NOVEL OF EDWARD CANFOR-DUMAS

Madhav N. Waghmare

Research Scholar

School of Language and Literature

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University,

Nanded, MS., India

&

Dr. Rajpalsingh S. Chikhlikar

Assistant Professor and Research Guide

Department of English

Lokmanya Mahavidyalaya, Sonkhed

Dist. Nanded, MS., India

Abstract:

Western countries can be seen as the new subject matter of literature, there is much more influence of Buddhism on their writings. This is postmodern world in that each and every thing has been changing in the flux of time. People and their hustle and bustle life always been backing the luxury and comfort, things went beyond the moral and ethical ways of life. The image of this true society and that has been reflected by the literature. The importance of the philosophical trends progressed and it admired as true essence of the life. Mainly Buddhist philosophy has been adopted by some British writers to reflect the true meaning of life in not only in British people but of whole world. The postmodern life it is all about the modernity and the complex structure of life, the chain of problems sustain one after one, the science and the technology not only gives comforts but creates more complexity among us. As modernity developing in every corner of the society the nature and form of the life tangled in complicated manner. But still the thoughts and the philosophy of the Buddhism heals the problems of the every kind of problem in these days also. Now days most developed societies started adopting the thoughts of Buddhism to overcome their everyday difficulties.

Keywords: *Postmodernism, Buddhist Philosophy, Self-realism, Nichiren Buddhism, Mental Peace, Faith, Religion, Diplomacy, etc.*

Theme of the Buddhism makes people livelier to live people on right way. Mainly in later postmodern period novelist like Edward Canfor-Dumas (born 1957) came forward to show the reflection on Buddhist philosophy and its impact on the British society. New generation which has been much more tended towards the Buddhism, Edward Canfor is a novelist and an award-winning TV scriptwriter. He won a scholarship to Latymer Upper School, Hammersmith. He read English Literature at New College, Oxford. Soon after having started writing scripts for popular television series like *The Bill* and *Kavanagh QC*, his first major featurelength programme was *Tough Love*, a powerful drama about police corruption, starring Ray Winstone. He then wrote the drama for the highly acclaimed BBC drama-documentary Pompeii: The Last Day, which was nominated for a BAFTA, and followed this in 2005 with *Supervolcano*. He moved towards penning novels in the same year, with the successful modern story *The Buddha, Geoff and Me*, which he followed in 2014 with *Bodhisattva Blues*. Edward always dealt with is Buddhist and both books have Buddhist themes.



Buddhism in *The Buddha, Geoff and Me*:

This is the story of Ed, a washed-up copywriter, just out of a relationship and plain out of luck. One day, Ed meets Geoff, an unusual Buddhist, and his life changes forever. Ed is painted as the epitome of a modern man, dragged down by life's difficulties. That the messages laid out are messages of value is unquestionable. The book is about reconnecting with life and appreciating the consequentialism of actions. My belief is, however, that the book is an inappropriate forum through which to ask the questions it poses. Were the plot better developed and the characters given more depth, the Buddhist message would be more effectively delivered. If you are looking to learn a little about Buddhism, I would suggest turning to non-fiction as the most valuable resource. Certainly, *The Buddha, Geoff and Me* can offer only limited insight. *The Buddha, Geoff and Me* is a novel with a decent message, although the story is regarding every day's life experience, and the message is more clear. This follows Ed a character in the novel, who is going through various crises in his life and who meets Geoff, a Buddhist, who helps him with his outlook and tribulations. Ed who resides in London area. His girlfriend has broken up relations with him and he hates his job. In short, things aren't going well. One day at a pub he meets Geoff, an unusually calm boy, friendly and helpful guy. Through his talks with Geoff and a number of Geoff's friends. Ed winds up learning the basic precepts of modern-day, practical Buddhism with Geoff's companion. Gradually as the book develops with the teachings of Geoff imparted get more in-depth and have greater impact on Ed's life until he starts to get things in a good perspective. The Buddhism described in this book is not about a man meditating on a mountaintop having a mystical moment, but explains the practical ways of dealing with the ups and downs of daily life. Writer did try to introduce Buddhism to people around, non-Buddhist. It was hard to unfold the Buddha's teaching the right way and at the right pace. This book definitely unfolds them nicely, especially to the people who belong to western, who have modern way of thinking. It is all about Ed's journey towards becoming a better person. All of this he is able to achieve through the almost magical power of chanting the mantra 'nam myo ho renge kyo' & the practical application of the Buddhist philosophy narrated in detail in the book.

Bodhisattava blues is sequel of *Buddha, Geoff and me*. The story and the journey of Ed moves forward where writer tried to focus more on realistic picture of life through the Buddhist philosophy. The ups and downs of Ed's life not only focused one individual's problem but it represents entire human beings sufferings. Ed - the author and the protagonist is interested in high philosophy and formal experiments with every life which he has gone. He just wants to make sense of his life with the help of Buddhist way. That's a straight, honest and entertaining way of writer who tries to present the altogether blend. The protagonist seems like to be ambitious. It is very simple and practical way of life that we adapt, it works on its own level, and will offer a friendly way in to Buddhist practice for many readers, much like its predecessor, *Buddha, Geoff and Me*. *Bodhisattva Blues* also focused on complex issues of modern time such as depression, homophobia, racism, bereavement, suicide and youth crime. It is complete reflection of the modern and developed society that Ed has trapped in it, the way that he find to have the adjustment with the recent condition of life. The more philosophy and thoughts represent the bodhisattva in the novel. There was not any confusion to make the things understand among the modern values. The values of good life had been come to know with the helping of Buddhist philosophy in the novels.

To conclude, the work on Edward Canfor has reflected the blend of Buddhist philosophy and British society, which make them to live life in self-realization manner. Writer tried to stress the things of modern life, its changes and need with the Buddhist thoughts. In a most unusual and a rather delightful way, the novel introduces you to Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. As luck would have it, Ed chances on Geoff in a typical English pub, where over a couple of beers, their conversation steers towards this lesser-known philosophy. As you read on, you end up discovering this practice along with



Ed, and his story of self-discovery gradually becomes yours as well. We all have an ‘Ed’ within us or in our lives and perhaps a ‘Geoff’ too. This could be my story, yours, or the story of the person living next door. The charming combination of Dumas’ very British sensibilities and dry wit spins a yarn that is appealing to the modern reader. The book’s informal tone does not rely on heavily worded. The lively description of the many distinctive landmarks such as the ever-present pubs, squares, and the ubiquitous London Tube form an integral aspect of the author’s point of view and makes the book hard to put down. This little gem of a book has all the ingredients of a bestseller. More than that though, it has a narrative that aims to nudge the reader to look beyond the pages and introspect. Very few books do this, and fewer authors have the capability of doing it in their very first one. The Buddha, Geoff and Me is highly recommended to those who are going through a hard time right now, and even those who are not going through anything at all.

References

- Ambedkar, B. R., *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, 5 May 2017, Samyak Prakashan; ISBN-10:9380688466. Print.
- Chowdhury, Rohini, *Gautama Buddha: The Lord of Wisdom*, Puffin Books (25 November 2011) ISBN-10: 01433317792. Print.
- Edelglass, William, *Buddhist Philosophy: Essential Readings*, Oxford University Press, 2009 ISBN-10: 0195328175. Print.
- Edward Canfor- Damus, *Buddha Geoffe and me*, Rider & Co; UK ed. edition (July 7, 2005) ISBN-10: 1844135683. Print.
- Edward, Canfor-Damus, *Bodhisattva Blues*, Rider Publication, London, ISBN 978-1-84604- 42988. Print.
- Emmanuel, Steven M. *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy*, Willyblackwill, 2016 ISBN-13: 978- 11191446631. Print.



This is an Open Access e-Journal Published Under A Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

To Cite the Article: Waghmare, Madhav, “Buddhist Philosophy in the Novel of Edward Canfor-Dumas”. Literary Cognizance, III-1 (June, 2022): 37-39. Web.